provide means for their education, to improve the economic standard of the families to which they belong and also see that such families whose children are forced to become labourers are brought into mainstream and are in a position to participate in the national life and enjoy all the benefits as citizens of this nation

MR. CHAIRMAN: How can the Labour Minister answer all these questions? You must ask him something relating to the employment of child labour. All right, Mr. Sangma, if you have any answer, give it.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, as far as the figure is concerned, a survey has been made by the National Sample Survey and the figure which I have placed before the House is from their report. I think honourable Members earlier said that this figure is not correct and it must be 30 million-odd. There are other social organizations, voluntary organizations, who have on their own conducted a survey. Well, the figures certainly do not tally—I must admit—but we have to go by the figures of the Planning Commission. As far as the families of child labour are concerned, we have the Sivakasi project, a Rs. 14 crore project. We have also thought that because of economic necessity, maybe, the children are forced to work. In order to prevent it we have started a printing press worth about Rs. 56 lakhs at the moment where we want to give employment to the mother of the family so that she doesn't send her children to other factories to work. This is to give an alternative means of livelihood for the family. This has been contemplated. But I am told, Sir—I have not gone after launching the project to verify—that even if the mother gets a job here, the child still continues to go. I do not know how to prevent it. It is a question of family and I cannot go and ask every family. But we are trying to provide an alternative job for the family.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Mr. Virendra Verma in his question casually mentioned that there is a six per cent child labour in Tamil Nadu. The hon. Minister in his reply has mentioned that 45,000 of child labour is there in Sivakasi. According to me these information are incorrect. The hon. Minister has stated that there are 45,000 child labourers in Sivakasi, but I may point out that the total population of its municipal area itself is less than 50,000. It is a second grade municipality. Considering...

AN HON. MEMBER: It may include children from neighbouring areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What you say does not disprove the Minister's answer.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: No, Sir. My point is that this type of propaganda has been engineered by rival industries in order to defeat the industrial development for Sivakasi.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is disallowed. Next question.

Modification of the Public Provident Fund Scheme

*164. SHRI D.B. CHANDRA GOWDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has recently modified the Public Provident Fund Scheme;

(b) if so, what are the details of the modifications made; and

(c) to what extent the subscribers will be benefited by these modifications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A copy of the Notification modifying the Scheme has al-

ready been laid on the Table of the House on 18th July, 1986. The modifications include increasing the limit on subscriptions in a year to Rs. 60,000, permitting the subscriber to make one withdrawal per year from 6th to 15th year of the account and providing for payment of balance upto Rs. 1 lakh to legal heirs on the basis of affidavits.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: May I know from the hon. Minister as to how many subscribers have benefited out of these modifications and how many defaulting subscribers are there. I would also like to know the number of the defaulting members and the number of subscribers who have not claimed their amount. The hon. Minister may also let me know the amount that is lying unclaimed. What is the accumulated amount thus not claimed and what steps the Government propose to take to reduce the non-claimed subscribers to improve the position.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: There are more than six lakh subscribers for the Public Provident Fund Scheme. Another question asked by the hon. Member is regarding the number of persons who have not claimed. Sir, I do not have that figure. In regard to the question as to how many persons are going to benefit by these modifications, I may state that at this stage we are not in a position to give any reply, because this particularly...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why don't you say every subscriber will be benefited.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: It is surprising while the Press has given the figure of Rs. 14 crores as being unclaimed, the Ministry has no information. Anyway.

My second supplementary is whether it is a fact that unions and associations of the employees have suggested several changes in the General Provident Fund Rules. If so, which of them have been accepted and which of them have been rejected and the reasons for their rejection.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the Member is confusing between the Employees Provident Fund and the Public Provident Fund.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: No, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is nothing like employees in the Public Provident Fund.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: Certainly, Sir. Even the Fourth Pay Commission has gone into the question and has made certain recommendations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please put question, I will ask the Minister to reply.

SHRI D. B. CHANDRA GOWDA: I want to know as to what representations have been made and what suggestions have been sought and what are the reasons for not having accepted all the suggestions for change of the rules.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: Sir, as you have pointed out it has nothing to do with the employees Provident Fund. This scheme is primarily to provide a medium of savings to the self-employed persons, to the individuals and also to the Members of the undivided families. So, the question raised by the hon. Member is not relevant to this question.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: It is a good scheme, but there are some lacunae. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this limit of Rs. 60,000 will also be allowed under 80C for the purpose of deduction from income.

Secondly, this scheme was started in 1970. In 1985 this scheme completed its 15 years. But I am afraid many

people will completely close their accounts because they are not given the benefit for withdrawal in spite of the fact that they have continued after fifteen years. I would like to know whether those who extend their accounts beyond 15 years will be given the facility for withdrawal every year till their account stands and is continued.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: Sir, here that Act benefits subscription upto...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. He is only asking about right of withdrawal.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: Sir, he has asked for 80-C. Sir, subscription upto Rs. 60,000 by a playwright, an artist, musician, actor or sportsman qualified for deduction from taxable income under section 80-C of Income Tax Act and for all others, it is Rs. 40,000. Upto Rs. 6,000, it is exempted. From Rs. 6,000 upto 12,000, it is 50 per cent. From Rs. 12,000 upto Rs. 60,000 it is 40 per cent. Now, about the withdrawal, a subscriber is entitled to make one partial withdrawal every year from the 6th and 15th year. Earlier, a total of four withdrawals were permitted. Now, Sir, even the maturity period of account is 15 years. It can be continued at the option of a subscriber for the further block period of five years each.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Sir, my question has not been replied.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question is not correct.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Sir, he is a great admirer of yours and he has put a correct question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no, I do not want any compliments.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: O.K. Sir Sir the question that Mr. Jagesh Desai has asked was that for those who were allowed to save after Rs 40,000 in the Public Provident Fund Scheme, is the liberalization upto Rs. 60,000 applicable to them also? As far as I could see, the Minister of State for Finance has answered it in the negative. He will clarify if I have understood him correctly. But there is another question. The question is: if I remember well, in the Budget speech, it was mentioned that the rate of interest on Public Provident Fund Scheme would be 12 per cent but to my utter surprise, I see insertions in the news papers which continues to say that the rate of interest is 10 per cent. That is what I have seen myself. So, I want to know the correct position on that. Thirdly, he has inadvertantly broadened the question but I am relating it this way. I have, in fact, raised it with the Finance Minister also that if the Public Provident Fund Scheme permits a rate of return of 12 per cent, then why should not the Employees Provident Fund Scheme and also the Local Provident Fund in different units, who are not members of the Employees Provident Fund Scheme be allowed or facilitated to get a rate of return of 12 per cent? I have not got the answer from the Finance Minister as yet. He does not consider it an open house discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will give the answer if you sit. If you stand, he won't give the answer.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, what my colleague said was about the tax benefit. So far as subscription is concerned, that has been raised to Rs. 60,000 from 40,000. Anyone can subscribe upto Rs. 60,000. That has been made clear. It was a tax benefit and certain categories will get upto Rs. 60,000. Others will get it only upto Rs. 40,000.

Then about the newspaper report that only 10 per cent is being shown. if the hon. Member points it out, we will take corrective steps. It is 12 per cent that has been announced as per the Budget speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it 12 per cent on PPF?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: On PPF, it has been 12 per cent. On Employees Provident Fund that has been asked, 85 per cent is invested in special deposits...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. What is the rate of interest of EPF and PPF?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, on PPF, it is 12 per cent and on EPF, 85 per cent deposits are with the Central Government carrying an interest at 12 per cent and balance 15 per cent with the State Government which carries 11 per cent interest. So, 85 per cent of the EPF does carry interest of 12 per cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. The point really is: for the beneficiary, the interest for the Employees Provident Fund should not be lower than the interest for the Public Provident Fund.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I may submit that 85 per cent of the EPF does carry 12 per cent of interest. It is only 15 per cent which is invested in the State Governments, that carries 11 per cent. So 85 per cent does carry 12 per cent interest.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Sir, your point was absolutely valid to my mind. You said that it should not be less than 12 per cent. But what the Finance Minister says is that it will be less than 12 per cent, because 85 per cent does carry 12 per cent and 15 per cent less. Would you kindly request him that he changes the situation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, in so far as it lies in the power of the Chair, it will say that there must be an equitable payment of interest for all people.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: That 11 per cent is on the State Government securities and if hon. Members help on this, then, perhaps something can be done. (Interruptions) On 85 per cent on the Central Government securities, it is 12 per cent.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Even then they have to deduct at cost....

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: I have answered it fully.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will look into it. Please see that the employees provident fund interest is not less than the public provident fund.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, we need cooperation from the State Governments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Question No. 165.

Indian nationals languishing in Pakistani jails

*SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:†
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Indian nationals at present languishing in Pakistani jails and since when they are under detention;

(b) how many of them are (i) defence personnel; (ii) valid passport holders; and (iii) others;

(c) whether our embassy officials have been allowed to meet them; if so, with what results; and

(d) what steps Government have taken in the recent past for the release of these people and what further steps Government propose to take in the matter?

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lal K. Advani.